

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS)

2004 Needs Assessment for Public Information and Communication

Executive Summary

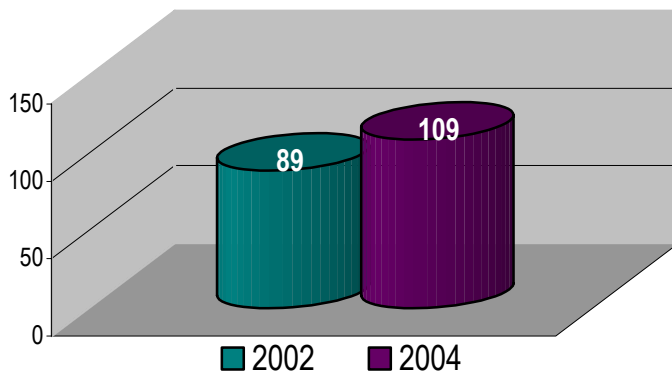
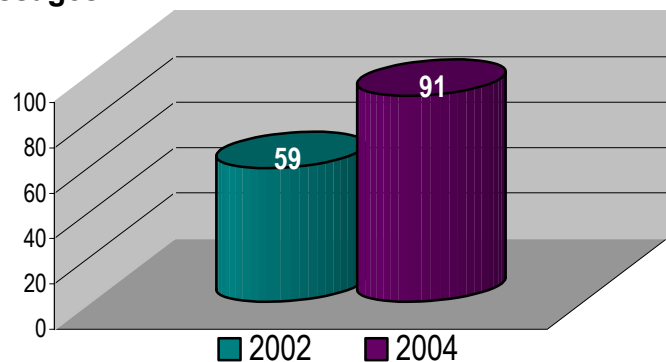
In continuing our efforts to provide critical information to the public and key partners in the event of a terrorist attack or public health emergency, the DHSS conducted a needs assessment with the local public health agencies in August 2004. This assessment process was completed by all 114 local public health agencies in conjunction with CDC's Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism Grant.

The 2004 findings were compared with the August 2002 needs assessment results (105 of 114 local public health agencies responded) to review progress and determine additional areas for development. The outcomes will also be used to develop additional risk communication trainings and coordinate bioterrorism public information efforts at the state and local levels.

Local public health agencies have realized many significant improvements between 2002 and 2004. These include:

Capability of Developing and Delivering Messages

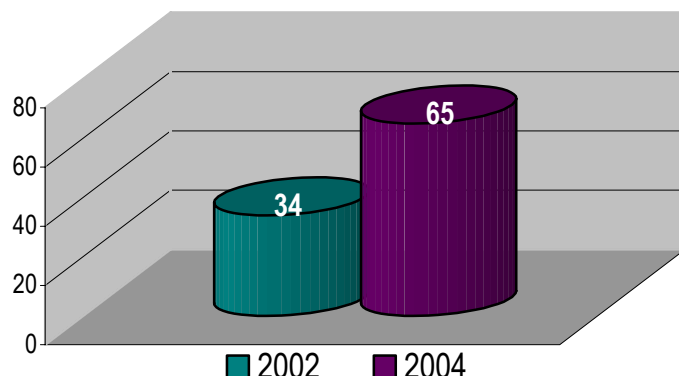
Compared to 2002, 32 additional local public health agencies increased the availability of printed materials such as fact sheets, sample press releases, and brochures for public health emergencies.



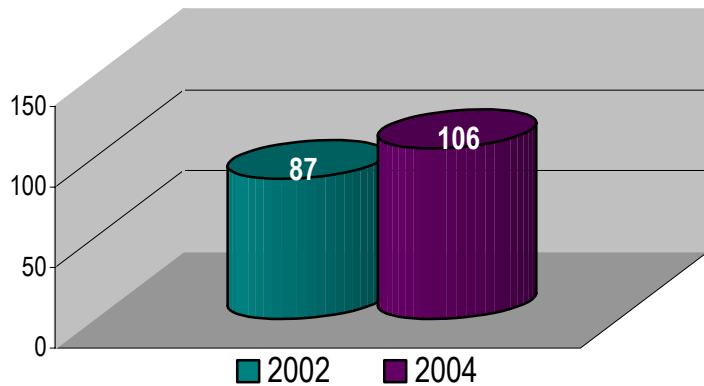
One hundred nine, or 96 percent, of local public health agencies now have emergency resource lists of essential organizations and telephone numbers available in their area.

Training Needs for Spokespersons

Between 2002 and 2004, the number of local public health agency administrators with moderate or high levels of education / training in risk communication / emergency management has increased.



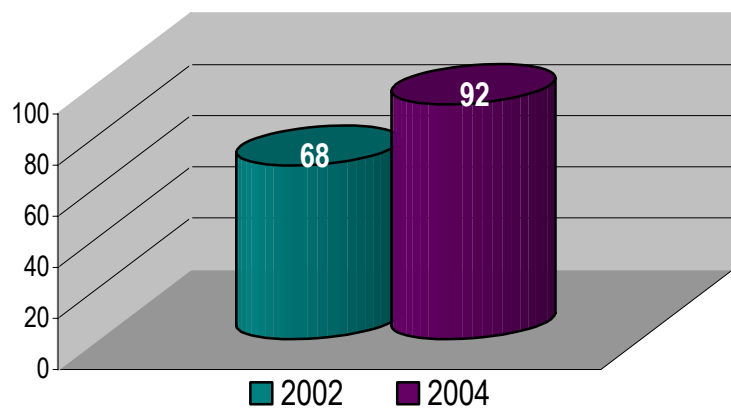
Methods of Delivering Messages



One hundred six of one hundred fourteen local public health agencies now have a system in place for distributing news releases / public information to the media – an increase of 19 since 2002.

Audiences that Need to be Reached

Between 2002 and 2004, an additional 24 local public health agencies have identified language translations needs in their local area.



Emergency Supplies

- One hundred of one hundred fourteen local public health agencies have computers, telephones, fax machines, and Internet connections ready to use during an emergency – an increase of 53 from 2002.
- Since 2002, 35 local public health agencies have purchased generators, to bring the total to 74 in 2004.
- Public information go-kits are available in 52 local public health agencies – an increase of 32 since 2002.

Ready in 3 Emergency Preparedness Education Program

- Ready in 3 Family Safety Guides are currently available in English, Bosnian, Spanish, and Braille.
- Local public health agencies continue to reach out to their local communities with the Ready in 3 message through presentations to local organizations and schools; mailings to senior centers, churches, and home health care agencies; and information published in local newspapers and newsletters.

Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Communications Plans

- As indicated from the results of the assessments, local public health agencies have considered the communication needs of their local area should the Strategic National Stockpile be activated.